PROLOGUE,

AND

EPILOGUES,

SPOKEN AT HEATHFIELD PARK,

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY

MR. NEWBERY'S FOURTH SON, CHARLES,

In the Character of NICOLAS, *at the Representation of the* MIDNIGHT HOUR, *at Heathfield Park, January 3d, 1793.*

So you're all met,—and each has got his seat,—
With rare keen appetites for this new treat—
I'm glad to see you——'Squire R—— how d'ye do?
So, Tom!—Ah, Master B—k—r, how do you?
I represent, you see, a footman here;
And now step in to get the tables clear;
And while they dish up, and the feast prepare,
I'll just present you with a bill of fare.—
In times of old, when neighbours met to cheer
With Christmas merriments the closing year,

The sports and pastimes then were rude and
rough,
As, *hunt the slipper*, *hoop*, *or blindman's buff*;
But, in these modern and more polish'd days,
Lo, Christmas gambols yield to real plays!
Actors and actresses we all are grown,
And here's a *theatre*—just come from town!
Nay, wonder not, for though it may seem droll,
Playhouses now, as well as players, stroll;
And wander round, without committing tres-
pass,
Just as they did of old—in cart of *Thespis*:
So Drury Lane (but why need I remark it?)
Of late, you know, absconded to th' Haymar-
ket——
Hop,—step,—and jump,—and by the same
remark,
Lo! Drury Lane is come to *Heathfield Park*.—
Our players too, as I shall quickly show,
Are all like those in London, whom you know.
First, brother *John*, a Cambridge macaroni—
Swaggers like *Palmer*,—near as stout and bony,
With voice as loud.—If Palmer's rather bigger,
Yet John is certainly the better figure.

Next *Bob* (whose back has got a little hunch)
Like *Parsons* droll, though not so much like *Punch.*
Parsons and *Quick*, by squeaking out before
They enter, set the galleries in a roar;
Robert, more easy, natural, and quiet,
Will gain applause, though not with so much riot:
He'll lay no clap-traps, practise no finesse,
But win your approbation by address.
Then brother *Frank*, who plays a servant's part,
(I wish he may have got it all by heart)
An idle rogue,—though smart enough and clever,—
To act like *Lewis* will be his endeavour.
Next come the *Ladies*;——well, and what of them?
Of sister *Mary*, and her friend, *Miss M.*?—
The latter plays the Spanish Gouvernante,
An old Duenna, or Tartuffish Aunt;
And though in acting she's the very part,
Her tongue will give what flows not from her heart;

A cast of character 'gainst nature warring,
Her own like those of *Abingdon* or *Farren*.
Her sister *Sally* too,—(nice girl, i'fegs!)
Comes in *man's* clothes, and we shall see her *legs!*——
"Talk of a coronation?"—what a show!
I ne'er yet saw a tip above her toe.
Our sister *Mary* next, brimfull of glee,
All life, and spirit, and song, and harmony,—
A little tit—scarce higher than your hand,—
The true *fac-simile* of *Mrs. Bland*:—
Nay more (the parallel is no absurd one),
She'll sing *Storace*, and she'll act *the Jordan*.
Then last, and least, poor little *I* appear,
With two huge fellow-servants* in my rear;
For them I beg your favour to invoke,
Unpractised in these arts—plain country folk;
Who kindly thus contributing their labours,
Perform the real parts of friends and neighbours:
But for myself, though vain may be the task, yet
Your minikin performer, poor *Pinbasket*,

* Two young men of the Village of Heathfield.

If you'll allow his little talents scope,
Is anxious to indulge one wish, one hope,—
(A Poet's license——'tis a flight Pindaric)
That little *Charles* may prove a little *Garrick!*
Thus in rude verse, and dogg'rel rhyme, I've shewn ye
Our mimic band—our *Dramatis Personæ*;
And now they're ready to exert each power
To entertain you with the *Midnight Hour:*
So I must in, and of my part observant,
Will be my master's and your *humble servant.*

EPILOGUE

TO THE

MIDNIGHT HOUR;

Acted at Heathfield Park, Jan. 3, 1793.

Spoken by Miss N. in the Character of Flora.

Now the play's over—does it not seem flat
Without a little more of *female* chat?
Without a line or two of epilogue?—
So I just gave our manager a jog;
But he exclaimed—What? sit down now to write,
—ha?
Without a thought?—*Minervâ* when *invitâ*:—
Talk'd of your patience, and *Quousque tandem*—
Some Latin nonsense—I don't understand him.
None of your stuff, said I, I *must* be heard—
(For ladies should have always the last word);
And as I found him such a churlish elf,
Declared I'd try an epilogue myself.—
Name then the string that Flora's hand should
touch;—
France, or mince-pies; the drama, or the Dutch?

On every theme we equal power display;
And though the men would teach us to obey,
We'll make them bow to our superior sway.—
While the just ardour of association
Pervades with generous warmth the loyal nation;—
While each male Briton, true and patriotic,
Unites to quell conspiracies exotic,—
We women will stand forth, pursue their plan,
And show them how to crush the *Rights of Man:*
Assert our claims; annul the Salique law—
Out-wit, and keep these tyrant men in awe;
With flap of fans effect our revolution—
Then will the toast be, *Queen and Constitution!*—
Nay, smile not, for you'll find our petticoats
The real government of *Sans Culottes.*
We owe to France, so wretched—once so gay!
Translated and adopted, this our play.—
Yet those who grace the Midnight Hour, will mark,
How France and England differ in the dark!—
While there destruction, tumult, and affright,
Give deeper horrors to the gloom of night,

Here cheerful peace, secure from all annoy,
Can make the Midnight Hour an hour of joy.
But now, perhaps, our failings to excuse,
Were better timed than politics or news.—
Should we, like *Nicolas*, to please our friends,
Have bustled long, yet fail'd to gain our ends;—
If lame, like *Ambrose*, these our troops—(yet,
hold!—
Though lame, like Ambrose, still we feel as
bold—)
Warm as our *General*'s, each breast of yours,
Turns censure, like old Cicely, out of doors—
And still we find you, where we need correction,
Deaf, as *Mathias*, to each imperfection.
Take then, in recompense of your good na-
ture,
This heartfelt wish, in lieu of jest or satire;—
" Long may the tenour of each future year
" Be happiness, unmingled with a tear;—
" Ne'er may you feel, from fortune's baneful
power,
" A time less pleasing than this *Midnight Hour*."

OCCASIONAL EPILOGUE,

AS SPOKEN BY

MISS N. IN THE CHARACTER OF CHARLOTTE,

At the Representation of Love a-la-mode, at Heathfield Park, on January 2, 1794.

WELL! I've escaped; and am rejoiced to find
I've left my train of lovers all behind.—
Should Charlotte, with HER SPIRIT, meanly stoop,
And condescend to choose from *such* a group?
Of Pride or Folly must she be the prey?
Oh, no:—how glad I am 'twas but a play.
Thus oft at night, when turbid thoughts molest,
And wayward fancy wrings the tortured breast;
Distress'd, despairing, driven to th' extreme,
Happy we wake and find 'twas all a dream.
Strange! that an author should have rack'd his brains
To teaze a damsel with such uncouth swains!

Ladies—I'll ask—would any one of you
Endure the trifling of a tawdry Jew?
To hear him tattle o'er a dish of tea,
"*You shweetest girl that ever I vas shee?*"—
[*Mimics.*
Or gently woo, while o'er your chair he lolls,
With converse sweet of "*three per shent. consols?*"
[*Mimics.*
And oh, kind stars! avert the horrid doom,
To live with gambling jockies and '*Squire Groom.*
A race of beings of uncommon breed—
All *knowing ones*, who neither write nor read:—
Unawed by shame, unheeding of a sin,
Who deem it sport to take each other in.—
But though the 'Squire his jockeyship may boast,
'Tis he has run the wrong side of the post.—
Nor let me sacrifice a heart sincere
To sly Sir Archy's sharp sarcastic sneer:—
To him, whose breast engross'd by sordid pelf,
No love can cherish, but the love of self;—
Whose haughty pride all worth and sense o'er-
looks,
"*If naé descended frae lairds, earls, or duks;*"
[*Mimics.*

E'en from Sir Call too, my betrothed spouse,
I must recall my rash, ill-promised vows.—
Droll! to make him the hero of the piece!
But Romans Rome, and Grecians favour'd Greece:
Just so our author; for the cunning elf
Was Dublin born—*an Irishman himself:*
Who, by one stroke, his countrymen would prove
Pure patterns of disinterested love.
Sir Call and Archy, these distinctions part:—
Sir Archy has a head without a heart:—
And of Sir Call, it may be truly said,
He has a heart, "*but lives without a head,*"—
[*Mimics.*
While thus their different characters I chalk,
"And my tongue trips in Tipperary talk."—
[*Mimics.*
'Tis truth, though seemingly a bull,—"I'd rather
"*The head and heart went hand in hand together.*"
[*Mimics.*
Sir Call is brave and generous—There's his claim.—
But each true British soldier is the same.

Nor let the sportings of the playful Muse,
The poison of false prejudice diffuse;
But with congenial spirit freely own,
That England, Ireland, Scotland, all are one:
Connected by the same cementing cause,
Their equal liberties, and equal laws:
Their virtues flowing from one common spring—
THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF A VIRTUOUS KING.—
Yet may not *Charlotte*, prejudice apart,
Be partial to an honest English heart?
For why to distant realms for virtues roam?
Virtues—that in full vigour bloom at home:
Content, if here in one she chance to find
Wit with good humour, sense with learning join'd,
Th' accomplish'd person, and the polish'd mind:
Such, such would be my choice.—Yet on reflection,
As 'tis not human to be all perfection,
He may have one defect.—I'm most inclined
To wish that he may prove a little blind—
Blind to my failings; yet I'd have him see
As much of beauty as he can in me:

And though some folks may laugh, and make
their sport,
Because some other folks are somewhat short;
Transform'd at once in his enchanted eyes,
I may appear, perhaps, *fair*, *tall*, and *wise*—
If, guardian, you can find out *such a man*;
Let him pursue, and *catch me—if he can*.

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